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CIRCULATION AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS OF THE
CALUMET REGION OF NORTHWEST INDIANA
AND NORTHEAST ILLINOIS
(THE FIRST STAGE OF OCCUPANCE—THE
POTAWATOMIE AND THE FUR
TRADER,—1830)

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Reprinted from ANNALS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN GEOGRAPHERS,
Vol. XLIV, September, 1954, No. 3, pages 245–274.

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CIRCULATION AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS OF THE CALUMET REGION OF NORTHWEST INDIANA AND NORTHEAST ILLINOIS* (THE FIRST STAGE OF OCCUPANCE—THE POTTAWATOMIE AND THE FUR TRADER,—1830)

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GENERAL OBJECTIVE

ACARTOGRAPHIC representation and chorographic analysis of the occupance patterns of circulation and settlement as they have changed in time are recognized as essential in understanding how the present-day landscapes have evolved out of the past. Illustrative of this principle is this paper which deals with the aboriginal stage of occupance of the Calumet-South Chicago region and its antecedent bearings on the interpretations of the present-day landscape.

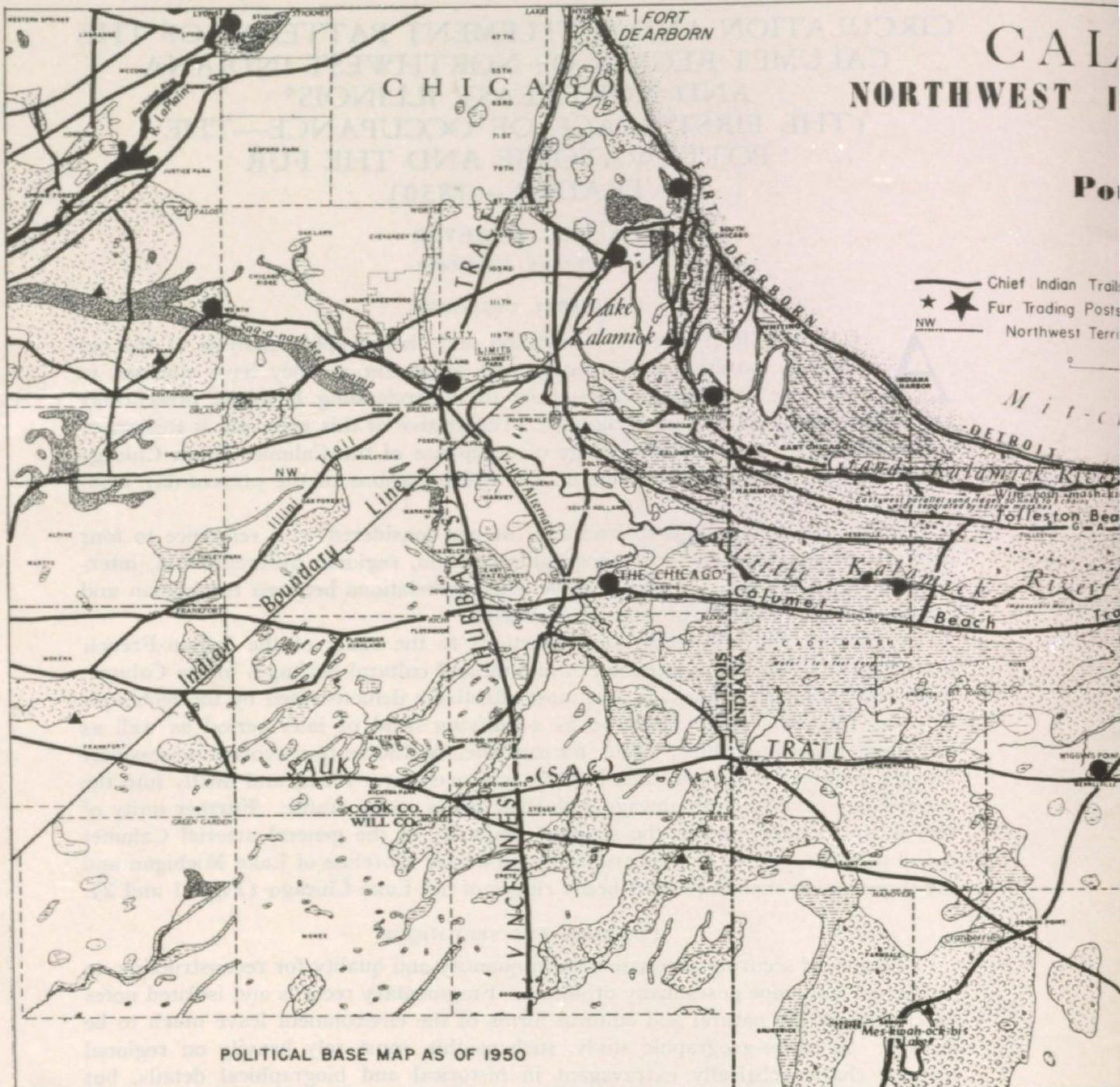
Significant relationships of land and life are considered with reference to four primary geographic functions: geographic position, regional differentiation, inter-regional relationships, and recognizable areal correlations between the human and physical elements of the various environments.

Application of these geographic functions to the study of the Indian-French period reveals that the progression of natural and cultural heritages in the Calumet from one period to the next can be most effectively demonstrated by the technique of using the pattern of circulation as a unifying bond of inter-period as well as inter-regional relationships. Thus, for example, the Indian trail evolves successively into the pioneer's dirt road, then into the improved farm roads, and finally into the present-day paved superhighways with their heavy motor traffic. Further unity of this theme is expressed in the striking similarity of the general arterial Calumet travel patterns, related as they are to the *cul-de-sac* shoreline of Lake Michigan and the three major ancient parallel beach ridges of old Lake Chicago (Figs. 1 and 2).

PROBLEMS AND TECHNIQUE

The task of securing adequate data in quantity and quality for reconstructing an aboriginal landscape poses many problems. Fragmentary records and isolated notes descriptive of the natural and cultural forms of the environment leave much to be desired. A micro-geographic study, such as this, must rely heavily on regional history, characteristically extravagant in historical and biographical details, but exiguous in geographic perspective.

* A study in historical geography, supported in part by research grants from the Indiana Academy of Science and Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters. Paper read before the Association of American Geographers.



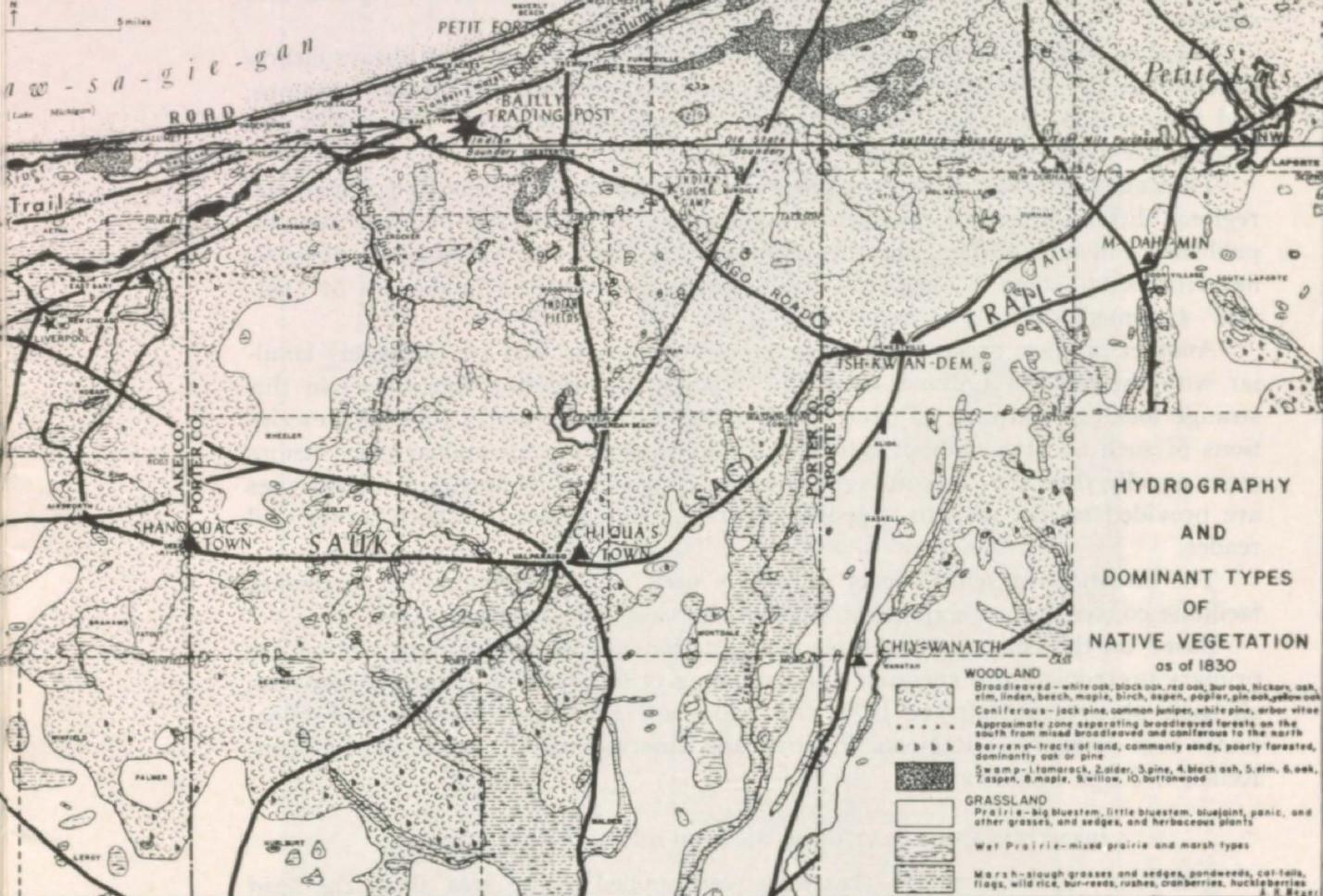
JMET REGION DIANA NORTHEAST ILLINOIS

The Fundament awatomie Occupance

--- 1830

- Chief Indian Villages or Encampments
- ▲ Indian Villages or Summer Camps

State Boundary, Ordinance of 1787



other sources. Fundament features compiled from forty seven plats and accompanying notes of the original Federal land survey, integrated by present-day field observations by the author.

The greatest challenge to the geographer, of course, is to find geographic material which lends itself to cartographic expression. Fortunately, the government deputy surveyors who laid out the range, township, and section lines were under instructions of the United States surveyor general to note and map certain geographic details. Thus notes are supplied on such items as course and width of streams; depth of marshes and swamps; general character of topography, of soil, of timber, and of other vegetation; presence of springs and minerals; evidence of Indian trails, pioneer settlements, and field culture. A check against other sources reveals that the sectional surveys did not consistently record all such phenomena. An Indian trail, for example, often appears merely as a short line crossing a section. Another similar discontinuous line elsewhere may or may not represent part of the same trail. One of the chief problems, then, is to determine the continuity of the aboriginal trails through the forests, over the prairies, and along the streams and marshes.

Areal boundaries on the congressional township plats also do not always clearly differentiate the several areal units such as marshes, prairies, wet prairies, swamps, and timberlands. In fact, it appears that several of these terms, like marsh and swamp, are used indiscriminately.

Thus another problem involves topographic interpretation, areal integration, and regional differentiation of the several landscapes. With the aid of other sources, published and unpublished, and direct present-day field observation, it is possible, nevertheless, to show in map form quite realistically what the fundament or "natural" Calumet originally looked like (Fig. 1).

Another problem arises from the fact that even people who are intimately familiar with the modern Calumet may find difficulty in orienting themselves in this strange looking landscape of over a century ago. Furthermore, regional descriptions of such an area without reference to white man's conventional place names seem equally difficult. Accordingly, modern civil township lines and urban sites are provided on the map to expedite geographic orientation for both writer and reader.

The historical present style of writing is used wherever practicable to further facilitate convenience of expression and vividness of landscape portrayal.

Based on the conviction that place orientation and geographic correlation are primary prerequisites to adequate understanding of natural and cultural landmarks, all basic phenomena referred to in this paper are given cartographic expression, under four categories: Regional Position and Interregional Relations, Landforms, Relief, and The Fundament.

IDENTITY AND LOCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE REGION

The term "Calumet region" has long been applied to the area about the head of Lake Michigan, but its delimitations have varied chronologically and chorographically. Among the first recognitions of this area as a region is that found recorded on a map by John Mitchell in 1755 as "Quadoche," a name applied by the

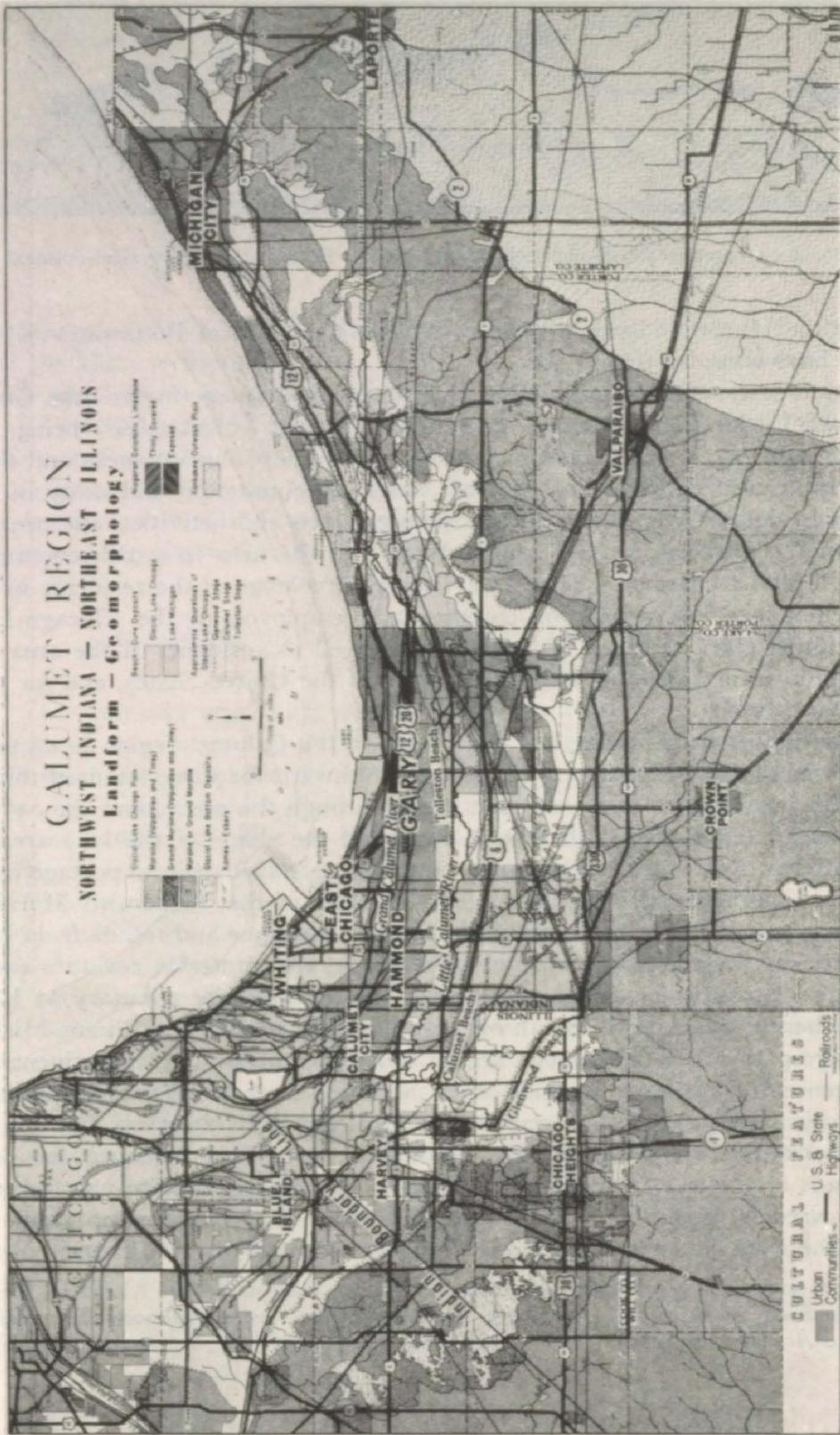


Fig. 2. Calumet geomorphology on which have been superimposed the present-day basic urban and circulation patterns. (Geomorphology adapted after Blatchley, Cressey, and U.S.G.S. quadrangle maps. City limits of urban communities drawn in conformity to records in the office of the Chicago Regional Planning Association.)



FIG. 3. Generalized silhouette transect of the Pottawatomie physical-cultural landscape

Iroquois to the Huron Indians, a tribe of which—the "Huron Pottawatomie"—is reported to have occupied this region.

The region derives its name from the chief Calumet drainage forms—the Grand Calumet and Little Calumet rivers and Lake Calumet—"Kalamick" being the Indian term used on the fundament map.¹ In reality the Calumet rivers and their tributaries quite well express the "natural" basis of delimitation and unity of the region as here defined. In terms of human occupancy and activities, the area as delimited on the map corresponds approximately to the area in which commuter service to Chicago is common. Thus a very large percentage of the residents in the Calumet region are industrially or commercially employed in the Chicago-East Chicago-Whiting-Gary centers. To outsiders as well as residents of the area the Calumet stands out as a leading industrial region of the United States, and for that matter, of the world.

Probably the most significant fact of location of the Calumet region is its position at the head of Lake Michigan. Extending southward for three hundred thirty-five miles, the lake deflects east-west land traffic through the area about the *cul-de-sac* of the lake. Associated with this position and the shape of the lake are the drainage patterns of streams whose sources and courses adapt them to portage facilities, with one another and with the lake. The crest of the Valparaiso Moraine, which passes a few miles to the north of the city by that name and trends from here in a great arc eastward and westward about the lake, constitutes in reality a continental divide. Streams on the north slope of the moraine are tributary to Lake Michigan, whereas those on the south or west slope are part of the Illinois-Mississippi drainage pattern. The Calumet region thus takes on unusual prominence in the convergence of lake and land traffic on, at, and near the head of the lake through all the historic stages of human occupancy. Thus a writer observes that "From time immemorial this wonderful land at the southern tip of Lake Michigan has been the crossroads of the western continent. Long before the first white man came it was crisscrossed by countless trails of the red man—trails coming up from the south, and the west, and the east, crossed by other trails of the Mascoutins in the

¹ For the meaning and geographic significance of Calumet place names see Alfred H. Meyer, "Toponymy in Sequence Occupance Geography, Calumet Region, Indiana-Illinois," *Proceedings of the Indiana Academy of Science*, LIV (1945) : 142-159.



from the north (Lake Michigan) to the south (the Kankakee Outwash Plain).

north-west and the lands of the Miamis and the Pottawatomies in the north-east and the Illini in the south-west. These trails met and crossed here as the steam-roads and highroads meet and diverge today.”²

The map in Figure 1, compiled from data of various sources, shows what the major trail pattern looked like.

A generalized skyline silhouette (Fig. 3) serves to illustrate diagrammatically the general vertical and horizontal space relationships of the east-west circulatory pattern to the physical landscape features, areally represented in relief model photo (Fig. 4).

GENERAL NATURE OF INDIAN TRAILS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON WHITE MAN'S OCCUPANCE

The relevance of a study of Indian trails in relation to white man's subsequent occupancy of a region is well brought out in the following statement by Teeter. “No people can inhabit a territory for countless years and pass on without leaving some influence to be felt there for generations to come. And so perhaps nothing that the Indian left plays so important a part in our life today as the trail. The Indian in following the natural pursuits of life had to go from place to place. In doing so he sought the shortest possible route, with due consideration for his own safety and natural barriers. Where the underbrush was scantest, around the hills and lakes he threaded his way. What proved to be the line of least resistance for one Indian was taken up by others and often in part by the larger wild animals. The Indian not only walked and rode over these paths but he often hitched his pony, by means of a strap over the shoulders and back and poles at his sides, to a basket in which he transported either passengers or baggage. These baskets helped materially in beating the paths, so by the time the first white men appeared here these paths were well defined trails and were taken up by the explorers, hunters, traders, missionaries, soldiers and settlers.

“Naturally even before the coming of the white man some of these paths served only a very local purpose, while others linked themselves into a greater system.

² John O. Bowers, A. C. Taylor, Sam B. Woods (Editorial committee) *History of Lake County* (quoting Armanis F. Knotts), Publication of the Lake County Historical Association. Calumet Press, Gary X: 1929. p. 100.

Two trails traversed the entire breadth of the continent. The Indians referred to them as the great eastern or western trails depending upon their local view point. Seldom if ever did an Indian cover the entire length of either of these trails, but often one would cover a thousand miles in one trip. Parts of these trails have woven themselves into our history and our lives, as for example the 'Cumberland Trail,' the 'Santa Fe Trail,' the 'Oregon Trail,' and the 'Sauk (Sac) Trail,' . . . [center of Fig. 1].

"Trails were not always strictly followed. Weather conditions, floods of rivers and streams, and especially wet times, the crossing of marshes often occasioned detours."³

RELATION OF THE CALUMET TO OTHER REGIONS OF THE UNITED STATES AS INDICATED BY CONTINENTAL TRAIL ROUTES

Arterial routes of travel represent one of the best geographic criteria for observing the relation of one region to another. This is of particular significance during this period in understanding how the region was explored and possessed; how its furs were exploited and marketed; how the federal government extended its claims to Indian lands from adjacent Indiana regions to the Calumet and defended it; and how and from what regions white settlers came in to buy the government lands ceded by Indian treaties.

Interregional Significance of the Lake Shore Trail

The Calumet came to be known as the "Great Short Cut" from the lands of the Chippewas and the Iroquois, from the Sacs and Miamis and Pottowatomies, to the prairies of the Illini and the Sioux."⁴

One of the most significant routes of travel through the Calumet was the trail mapped out by nature itself—the shore line beach of Lake Michigan, simply called the Lake Shore Trail (Fig. 1). It naturally forms the easiest and shortest route around the lake. The very occupants of the Calumet, the Pottawatomie, came into the region by this route (Fig. 5). Originally inhabiting the northeast shore of Lake Michigan, the tribe crossed the Straits of Mackinac and settled for a time in the Green Bay area of Wisconsin. From here they subsequently migrated southward on the Lake Shore Trail into the Calumet region.

The Lake Shore Trail from Green Bay to Fort Dearborn (Chicago) is known as the Green Bay Trail; its extension southeastward through the Calumet region to Michigan City on the lake and then to Detroit was called the Fort Dearborn-Detroit Road (Fig. 1). Over it filed the Indian, the French explorer, and the French, English, and American troops. On its course near the mouth of Rivière des Bois or Fort Creek (Dune Creek of modern Waverly Beach) stood Petit Fort

³ Emma Leah Teeter: Indians and Indian Trails, LaPorte, Indiana, no date. (Unpublished typewritten ms. in LaPorte City Library, 5-7.)

⁴ R. D. Hammons, *Original Government Surveys of Gary*. (A typewritten letter in Gary City Library, May 31, 1934: 29.)

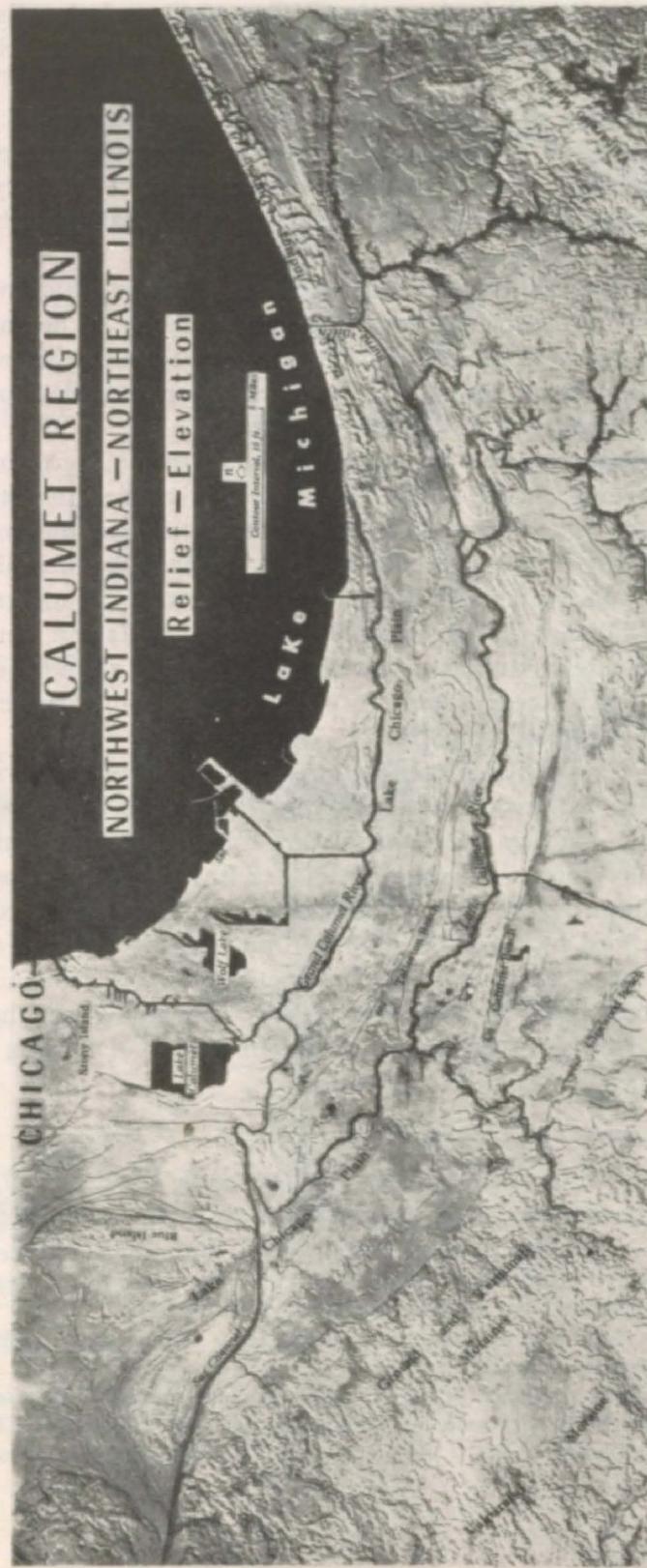


FIG. 4. A major portion of the Calumet in contour, after model constructed by the Department of Geography and Geology, Valparaiso University.

reportedly erected by the French in the early 1750's and the only local site identified with military activity between the British and the Americans of the Revolutionary War.⁵

The natural advantages of territorial exploration and aboriginal travel along this route is quite obvious. It always provided definite geographic orientation. The sand, always well drained, when compacted formed an excellent dry, level, and smooth pavement. The route avoided obstructions by trees, fallen timber, and high prairie grass.

The beach trail skirted the extensive marshes and swamps which make most of the Lake Chicago Plain impassable the greater part of the year. The only interrupting water courses to land travel along this route through the Calumet were the dual western and eastern mouths of the Grand Calumet River and the mouth of Trail Creek; the latter two were often fordable by sand bars.

The military significance of this trail is also noteworthy. The encroachment of white man on Indian lands in the Northwest Territory caused resentment on the part of the redskin here as elsewhere. It became necessary for the government to establish military outposts in the frontier country. Incidentally they also served as trading posts between the whites and the Indian. And so forts and trading posts, like those at Detroit, Chicago (Fort Dearborn), and Rock Island, formed significant termini of travel routes trending east-west through the Calumet, just as Mackinac, Fort Dearborn, and Vincennes were termini of north-south traffic through the west end of the Calumet region (Fig. 5).

The building of Fort Dearborn was ordered by President Jefferson in 1803. This was carried out by two detachments of troops dispatched by Secretary of War Dearborn from Detroit—one by the Lake Huron-Lake Michigan route, the other overland. The land party proceeded from Detroit to LaPorte County by the famous Sauk Trail, then up Trail Creek Trail to Michigan City, whence it completed the journey to Fort Dearborn by the Lake Shore Trail. "This was the first body of American soldiers to cross the Lake and Calumet region of Indiana and in constructing Fort Dearborn, little did they dream they were laying out the foundation of one of the mightiest cities of all times. But four cabins of traders were in existence in Chicago when the soldiers arrived."^{6,7}

Interregional Significance of the Sauk Trail

The second major line of communication is the Sauk (Sac) Trail, the longest and most important interregional trail passing through the Calumet.⁸ It represents

⁵ *The Calumet Record*, Historical Edition, XIX, No. 50 (1916); no author nor pages given.

⁶ T. N. Cannon, H. H. Loring, C. J. Robb, *History of the Lake and Calumet Region of Indiana*, Historians' Association, Indianapolis, Indiana: 1927. p. 46.

⁷ Fort Dearborn was destroyed by the Pottawatomies and Winnebagos in 1812, and reconstructed by the War Department in 1816.

⁸ A notable local Indian authority of the Chicago area designates this also as a mound builders trail. See Albert F. Scharf map on "Indian Trails and Villages of Chicago, and of Cook, DuPage, and Will Counties, Ills. (1840)," (1900-1901). In the library of the Chicago Historical Society.

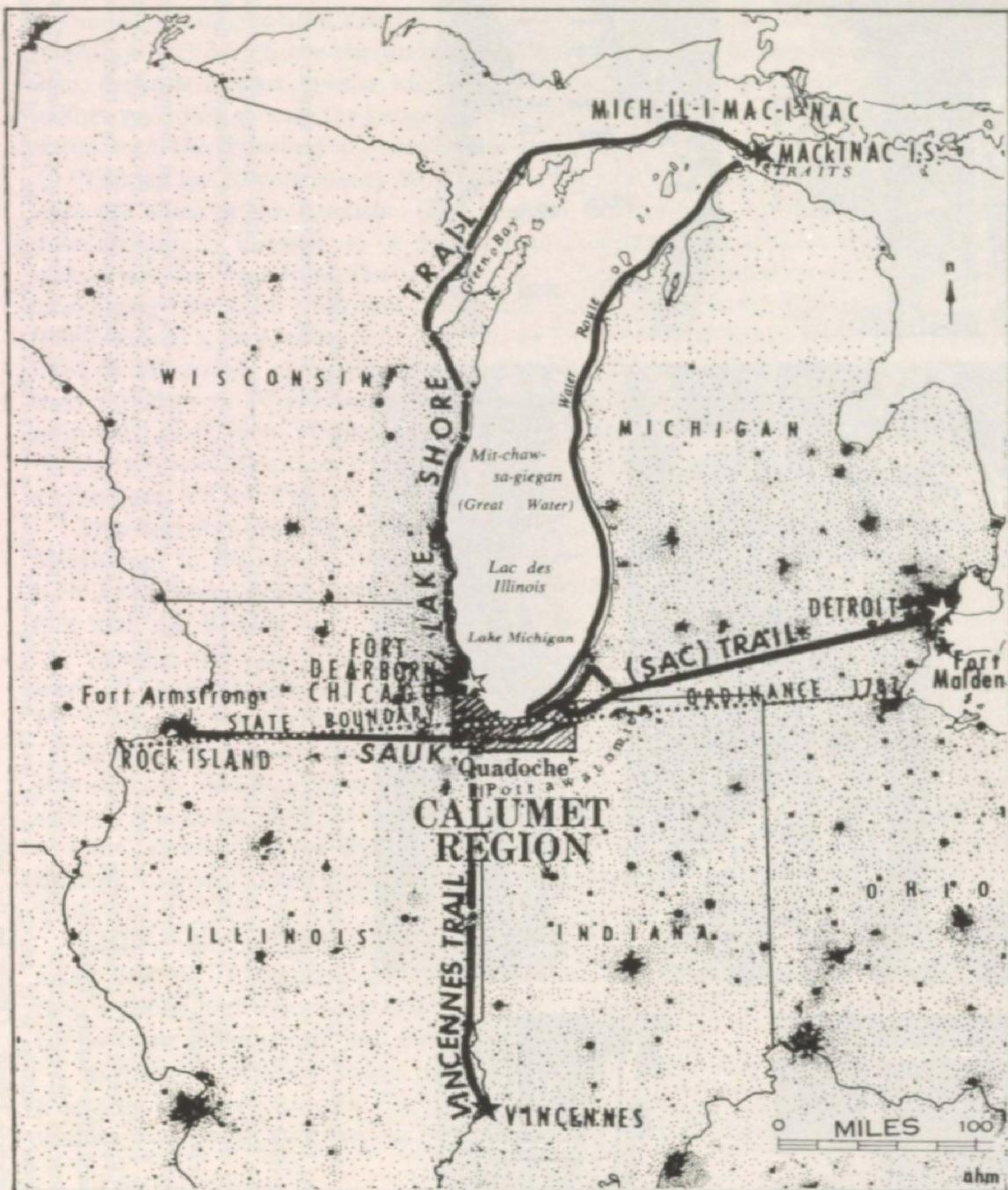


FIG. 5. Regional geographic relations of the Pottawatomie with the "outside world." Base map, by the U. S. Bureau of Census, shows population pattern of the area as of 1950.

BAILLY HOMESTEAD
Name of Joseph Bailly,
a French-Canadian, who
established a fur-trading
post here on the Detroit
old stage road in 1822. It
became a center of trade,
culture, and religion. The
family cemetery is nearby.

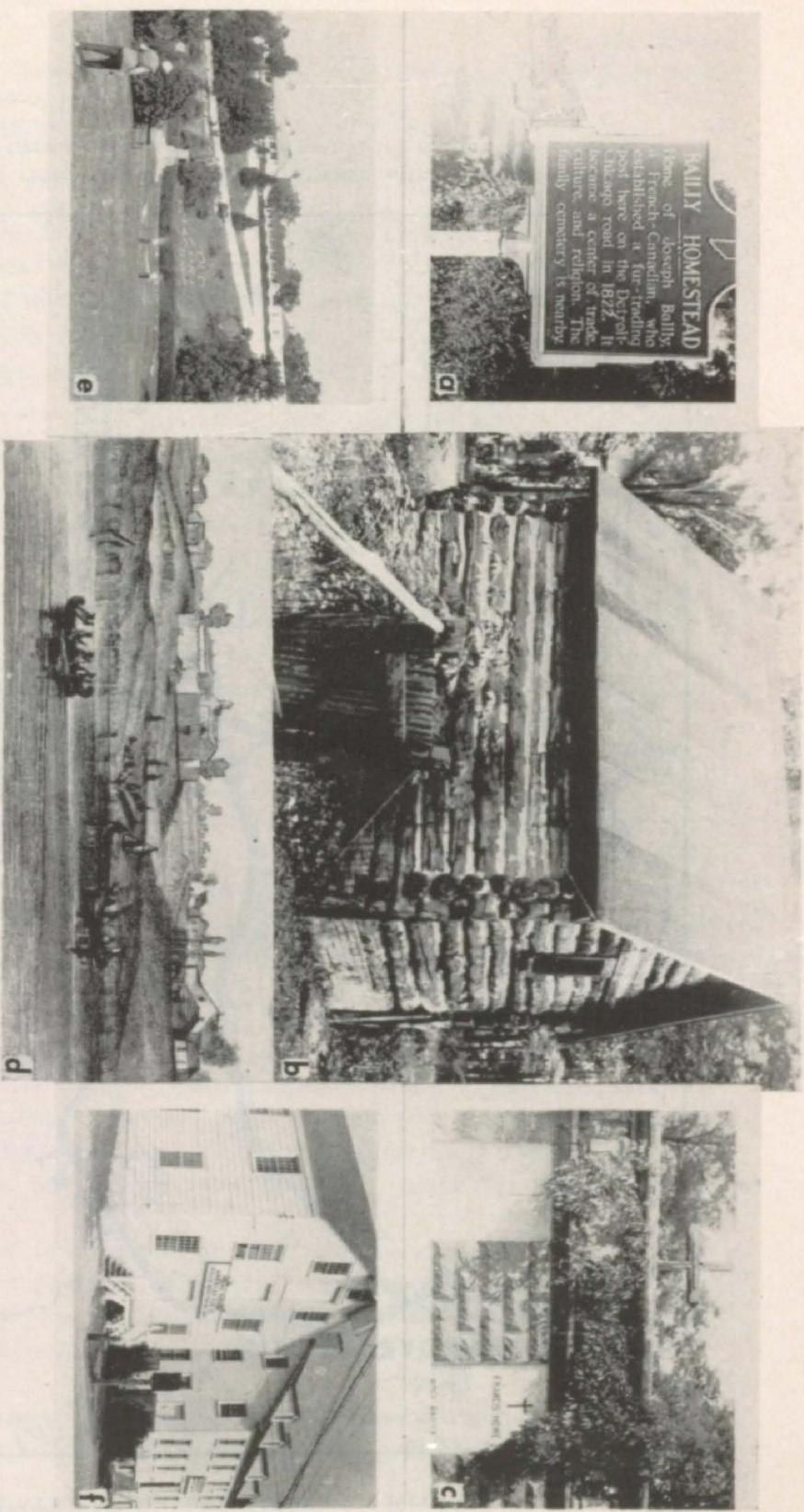


FIG. 6—Geographic landmarks of the Pottawatome Indian-French Fur-trader occupancy of the Calumet Region.

- One of the relict travel routes of Indian-Pioneer days converted into modern Highway US 12, at the intersection with another road to the right which leads to the historic Bailly homestead. (Photo by the author.)
- The oldest of the four partially reconstructed relict buildings of the original half score structures of the Bailly trading-mission post, whose location is shown in Fig. 1. The now private posted property—not open to the public—represents the oldest settlement of northwest Indiana. (Photo by Saidla Studio.)
- The Bailly cemetery, north of the homestead, on a sandy knoll on US 12, where, according to the inscriptions on the markers, rests "Honore Gratiel Joseph Bailly de Messein" and some members of his family. Wall is of modern construction. (Photo by the author.)
- What Chicago (Fort Dearborn), a neighboring Calumet fur-trading post, looked like at the time Bailly founded his own trading post. (Sketch in Schoolcraft's "Indian Tribes.")
- Old Fort Mackinac on "Michilimackinac" Island, where Bailly marketed his furs. The statue is that of Jacques Marquette, whose explorations and missionary journeys were among the first to bring into geographic focus the extra-regional relations of the head of Lake Michigan area to Mackinac Island. (Photo by the author.)
- Mackinac buildings of the American Fur Company which was founded by John Jacob Astor in New York in 1808. The trading post was established in the same year as the one by Bailly (1822), he being one of the agents of the fur company. (Photo by the author.)

the transcontinental trail of northern United States and, in the Calumet region, as the maps reveal, coincides roughly with the modern routes of Indiana 2 and Lincoln Highway, US 30. Since the understanding of the course of present-day highways, then, depends in part upon a knowledge of the pre-existing aboriginal trails, it is further revealing to note the geographic connections and historic circumstances associated with the founding and naming of this route.

"During the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, the Sauk and Fox Indians were the allies of the English. The English Government, for their services, gave them an annuity in goods to be delivered to them at Malden, Canada, across and a little down the river from Detroit [Fig. 5]. Later the United States Government, in exchange for land, promised to pay the Sauks six-hundred dollars and the Fox four-hundred a year, to be paid in goods in Detroit. The Sauks and Fox originally lived in Wisconsin along the Fox River. By a treaty, they agreed to surrender their territory in Wisconsin and move to Rock Island, Illinois. From there they went each year, men, women, children, ponies and dogs, to Detroit and Malden to receive the annuities, and from this annual pilgrimage the trail came to be known as the Sauk (Sac) Trail."⁹

This was the route Black Hawk often traveled in going from his home on the Mississippi to Detroit.¹⁰ Over this trail also marched the Sacs and Foxes from their Rock Island home eastward to help the Five Nations, their allies, in their conflict with the British.

Actually, the Sauk Trail extended as far eastward as New England, and westward to Omaha where it divided into two branches, forming the southwest Santa Fe Trail, and the northwest Oregon Trail.

Knotts, a local authority on pioneer history, points out that "the old Sauk Trail was not only used by explorers, traders, trappers, and soldiers, but later by the early settlers who came along the trail and settled upon it or followed out some other trail to some favorite spot for their new home." He asserts that "No other Indian trail through LaPorte County was so definite and used to the same extent, as the Sauk Trail."¹¹

And Scharf, the leading Indian trail authority on the Chicago-Calumet region, noted that "With the coming of white man the Sac Trail became first a bridle path, then a public highway, stage and mail route" along which the main streets of many towns were subsequently laid out.¹²

Even those who are today familiar with the traffic flow of speeding cars and trucks on dual lane Lincoln Highway will agree with Ball that "To see in one continuous line, living and moving westward now, the Indians that during their occu-

⁹ Teeter, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹⁰ Otho Winger, *The Potawatomi Indians*. Elgin, Illinois: 1939. p. 57.

¹¹ A. F. Knotts, *Indian Trails, Mounds and Village Sites of LaPorte County, Indiana*. (Typewritten ms.), 1932. p. 3.

¹² Albert F. Scharf, *Indian Trails and Villages in Lake County, Illinois*. (Unpublished ms.), p. 123.

pany had passed along it, and then, after them, the white covered wagons with ox teams and horse teams that from 1836 till even now (1900) have passed along that roadway, would be a sight, a procession, worth going many miles to see."¹³

It is to be expected that a trail of such prominence should have many other leading and tributary trails directing their traffic to and from this chief line of Calumet interregional circulation. These tributary connections, as placed on our map, are considered in a subsequent section.

Interregional Significance of the Vincennes (Hubbard's) Trace

The third most important route of interregional communication crosses the Calumet from south to north about six to eight miles west of the Indiana-Illinois state line. Originating at Vincennes, it came to be known as the Vincennes Trace, and, since its destination was Chicago, it was locally referred to in the Calumet region as the Old Chicago Road. Because it followed the early chief Indian trail in the area, it was also known as the Pottawatomie Trail. Whereas Gurdon E. Hubbard, a famous fur trader of the American Fur Company, came to the Chicago region over this route in 1818, it also was referred to by some as Hubbard's Trace.

It should be pointed out that these latter terms at times cause confusion for the reason that the name "Chicago Road" in the literature on the area is also applied to the early pioneer road connecting Detroit with Chicago via lake shore or near lake shore routes to Chicago (see trail in Jackson Township, Fig. 1). Similarly "Pottawatomie Trail" has been applied loosely to a number of trails on the Indiana side as well as the Illinois side of the Calumet region. And as for Hubbard's Trace, this term at times is used synonymously with Vincennes Trace and at other times is seemingly restricted to a shortened alternate branch of this route directly from Thornton to Chicago. This shortened route in turn has also been referred to variously as the Holland Road and Chicago City Road.

These examples of early road toponomy indicate that already for this early date one senses the difficulty of identifying thoroughfares which branch, join, or cross one another, and which have developed a veritable maze of traffic lanes often difficult to distinguish even with the aid of modern road maps.

As in the case of the Lake Shore Trail, the significance of the Vincennes Trail arises mostly from the strategic military defense and pioneer settlement qualities of the points which the trail connected. Vincennes was founded as a French military post in 1731, and here, four years later, was established the first permanent settlement in Indiana. After the fall of Quebec, an English garrison occupied the fort. During the Revolutionary War, General George Rogers Clark took possession of it, and in 1800 it became the capital of Indiana Territory.

The geographic importance of Fort Dearborn has already been pointed out in connection with the Lake Shore Trail.

Barce observes "The reasons for the existence of this great [Vincennes] trail

¹³ T. H. Ball, *Northwestern Indiana from 1800 to 1900*. Chicago: 1900. p. 77.

are at once apparent. The Pottawatomie control . . . extended from Lake Michigan to the north bank on the Wabash. . . . Now this great trail, running the whole length of the territory . . . served to unite all the Indian villages . . . and connected the different bands of this tribe with the trading post under the guns of Fort Dearborn at the north, and the ancient post of Quiatenon, the French traders of the Wabash, and the post at Vincennes on the south. . . .

"Along this trail passed the Pottawatomie of the Wabash villages who took part in the terrible massacre of the garrison at Fort Dearborn on August 15, 1812. . . ."¹⁴ Winger notes that "Over this trail the Pottawatomie and Winnebago warriors went south to confer with Tecumseh and to take an important part in the Battle of Tippecanoe. Along this route, from Danville to Chicago, Gurdon Hubbard later established trading posts so that the Vincennes trail became known as Hubbard's Trace. It became a great pioneer road for emigrants to the west. Thousands of moving vans and caravans went to their homes in the northwest by this route from the Ohio River. It was one of the first routes to be improved by the State of Illinois. In its early pioneer days this route was dangerous to travel. Here and there in this great prairie were low hills or groves which afforded good places for camping. But some of these pleasant looking places became the rendezvous for robbers who went forth to rob and kill the travelers. From this trace other trails led to hunting grounds and to places where banditti had their centers."¹⁵

THE CALUMET REGIONAL TRAIL PATTERN

With the maps on regional position, landform, relief, and vegetation serving as environmental background, we shall now analyze the more significant trail routes as related to these factors as well as to indicate their relationships to the Indian villages and their contemporary white settlements.*

The original surveyors were under government instructions to record trails. Such information was considered of value for several reasons. It has long been recognized that Indians, living as they did like the animals in the closest adjustment to their environment, sought out the line of least resistance to movement. The first white traders, travelers, and settlers would logically take advantage of Indian-made thoroughfares. As indicated above, these highway "naturals" actually were selected in part as routes of the modern highways. It was recognized also that mapped trails would serve as guides to men who desired to buy land without seeing it. And the government itself was interested in trails for military purposes.

Important as was such information, the surveyors of the Calumet region unfortunately did not take this part of their assignment too seriously. If we had to de-

¹⁴ Elmore Barce and Robert A. Swan, *History of Benton County, Indiana*. The Benton Review Shop, Fowler, Indiana: 1930. p. 59ff.

¹⁵ Winger, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

* To reduce the paper to publishable limits, 22 pages of descriptive and interpretative material of the ms. had to be deleted, thus increasing reliance on the maps for topographic portrayal and interpretation of the aboriginal landscape.

pend solely upon the surveyors' plats and notes for trail information, it would, with few exceptions, be next to impossible to draw continuous trail routes from one trail junction or terminus to the next. The Sauk Trail is practically the only primary exception. Fortunately, several early enthusiastic and enterprising pioneers, contemporary or near contemporary of the Indians, interested in discovering and recording facts of local county geography and history, supply considerable, if not all, of such data as are needed to fill in and tie together the widely separated section-line trail markings of the early survey. Even with such aids, some trail sections cannot be mapped with absolute certainty, and some evidence is forever lost.

Primary Trails and Their Relationships to Regional Differences in Position, Terrain, Vegetation, and Settlement

The cartographic data on the three regional maps (Figs. 1, 2, 4) may well be correlated and integrated by a somewhat detailed description of the landscape along selected routes of travel. Such may be regarded as "trail transects," revealing how the topographic forms are related to each other, and especially how the several routes of travel are related to regional differences in geographic position, terrain, vegetation, and settlement forms. It is often stated in local literature that Indians follow the "most direct" route, or the "line of least resistance." To what extent are these statements actually true? And to what extent were the incoming white settlers guided by these environmental or aboriginal influences in building their own road? Where there was a choice between a path through the forest or over the prairie, which one was generally selected? Did the different kinds of timber and marsh terrain and vegetation affect the travel situation? Description of several representative routes of primary circulation should aid us in answering such questions. We may think of them as geographic transects.

Sauk (Sac) Trail Transect

The most significant route of Indian travel across the region seems to have been the Sauk or Sac Trail. It was the principal east-west Indian route across the United States. As indicated above, along it Sauks from Rock Island, Illinois (Fig. 5), travelled annually to Detroit to get their \$600 annuity in goods given to them by the United States Government for land concessions. Previously the Sauks had made an annual pilgrimage to Detroit and Malden for gifts from the English. Until the construction of the dual lane for the new Lincoln Highway (US 30), the Sauk route constituted the chief traffic-way across the Calumet region. Its vestigial elements have been inherited in part by the new Lincoln Highway, the old Lincoln Highway (now US 330), and Indiana 2 (Fig. 2). On the surveyor's plats, sections of this general course were marked "Rapids of Illinois River to LaPorte," and "Rock Island to Detroit."

The Sauk Trail enters the Calumet region on the western boundary of Frankfort Township, where, in the middle of the township, it crosses the old Indian Boundary Line, significant in the history of the Illinois and Michigan Canal project. From here its route is eastward through Rich and Bloom townships, following in a general

way the higher terrain of the Valparaiso Moraine across the Illinois-Indiana state line to Dyer. At the east end of Section 32 of Bloom Township, it crosses the old state road from Vincennes to Chicago.

Throughout this course the country is a dry rolling prairie, which facilitated travel. Marshes, swamps, ponds, and "wet prairies" which, as can be seen on the fundamet map, are so common in the Calumet of this period are here restricted on the moraine to the low swales and stream edges. The survey plats show them to be extremely varied in size, shape, and frequency. Poorly drained depressions in this section number as many as three or four per square mile, as in Rich Township, where they are by far most numerous. But the trail finds no difficulty in detouring about them since the wet spots are relatively small and circular or elliptical in shape.

The only other physical obstacles in this course are Thorn Creek with some lowland on each side, a tributary to Thorn Creek farther east, and an unnamed stream just east of the state line. None of these, nor a strip of timber on each side of Thorn Creek, presents a serious obstacle, however, for the creek is near its headwaters and is less than 25 links wide.

From Dyer through Schererville to the east end of St. John Township, the Indian took advantage of the high and dry sandy ridge—the Glenwood Beach—deposited by the old glacial Lake Chicago against the Valparaiso Moraine at about 55 feet above the present level of Lake Michigan (Fig. 4). Unlike the adjacent moraine on the south, the sand ridge has no undrained depressions on it. And unlike the low lying wet prairie and impassable marshes on the north, it is elevated 20 to 30 feet and is thus negotiable even in the wettest season. A light growth of timber, commonly referred to as "oak barrens," seldom impedes travel.

Entering Ross Township, the trail leaves the beach ridge, which here trends northeastward, and again enters upon the moraine. After a few miles through oak forest, it extends over a dry prairie eastward to Merrillville. This village site, next to a small grove of timber, is one of the most important Indian settlements on the Sauk Trail. As a pioneer settlement it came to be known as Wiggin's Point and also later as McGinn's Village. "It contained a large plat of smooth and well worn ground for dancing. . . . A few rods distant was the village burial ground, the best known Indian cemetery in Lake County. . . . The site of the village and cemetery seemed well chosen, being at the juncture of the woodlands and the prairies."¹⁶

But its most noteworthy geographic feature was its focal traffic position. Sixteen trails are said to have converged on this point.¹⁷

The main intersecting trail, as shown on the fundamet map, is that originating at Kankakee, Illinois, which enters the Calumet area at Cedar Lake, and, after crossing Merrillville, heads northeast to Liverpool near the junction of Deep River with the Little Calumet, where there apparently was a fur-trading post.

¹⁶ William Frederich Howat (and seven co-authors), *Standard History of Lake County, Indiana, and the Calumet Region*. Chicago: 1915. p. 19.

¹⁷ Winger, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

Continuing eastward over the dry prairie for two miles the Sauk Trail again enters a forest, dominantly of yellow and white oak, through which it extends for three miles to the Indian village of Shanoquac's Town, site of modern Deep River on the river by that name. Near it was a huge mound, shaped like a flat iron, at the apex of which was an enormous well twenty-five feet in diameter, probably used for some sort of water cure.

For the next seven miles the trail extends eastward over "swell and swale" surface, through a rather heavy growth of white oak, red oak, yellow oak, and bur oak. Then it encounters the wet prairie and stream of Chiquew Creek (Salt Creek) just before entering the modern site of Valparaiso.

At Valparaiso was another significant trail junction. Several trails from the Kankakee region projected northward. One followed essentially Indiana 2 into Valparaiso and then the approximate modern Indiana 49 to Chesterton. Thence it continued northward to Tremont, where it joined the famous Calumet Beach Trail. Another line of traffic branched off northeastward, headed for Abercronk on Lake Michigan at the mouth of Trail Creek, site of modern Michigan City.

An Indian village is also reported in the neighborhood of Valparaiso. "The first white settlers in this region (Center Township) found, on the west side of the southeast quarter of Sec. 19, Range 5, a little north of the LaPorte road, a small Indian village of perhaps a dozen lodges, which was called Chiqua's Town, from an Indian who had been the chief of a remnant of the Pottawatomies."¹⁸

No evidence for the existence of this village is indicated in the original survey records, but a "field" is noted on the edge of the timber on the southern boundary of Section 19 of Center Township. However, this field, like six others noted in the prairie area to the east and south, may represent white man's culture, since several bear Caucasian names.

From Chiqua's village the trail heads northeasterly to the Indian village of Ish-kwan-dem (Westville) and M-dah-min (Door Village). Between Chiqua's village and Westville the trail is deflected sharply northeastward onto the dry Washington Township prairie to avoid the marshes of the headwaters of Crooked Creek which is here from one to two miles in width and covered with water up to several feet in depth.

After crossing the smaller arm of the Crooked Creek marsh the trail skirts the longer marsh by striking through a rather heavily timbered tract until it reaches Westville. There it leaves the oak timber tract at about the center of New Durham Township and crosses the level and dry LaPorte prairie to M-dah-min.

Both the Indian villages of Ish-kwan-dem and M-dah-min are located on open prairie next to forest (Fig. 1). The former is said literally to mean "the door;" at the latter place is "Door Village," and the French equivalent "LaPorte." The prairie in this area as well as the city of LaPorte only a few miles distant to the northeast have been so named.

¹⁸ J. Gilbert McAllister, "The Archeology of Porter County," Indiana History Bulletin, X (Oct. 1932) : 14.

As Knotts points out, "This [Ish-kwan-dem] was a favorite location, being on the boundary of the prairie and at the entrance of the woods or forest. Hence the door, going into or coming out of . . . and from this place, the word LaPorte (the door) was more than likely derived."¹⁹

Solon Robinson reports that "Adjoining the Door Prairie on the north is a very large body of Sugar tree timber. The Indians have many excellent Sugar Camps there. They are well furnished with large copper and brass kettles, which at the end of the season they bury until wanted again."²⁰

From Door Village the trail leaves LaPorte Prairie of Scipio Township, enters the oak barrens and lake district of Center Township to the north (site of modern LaPorte), and then heads northeastward for Detroit via Grand Travers, Jonesville, and Ypsilanti.

Journeys from Detroit and other points in Michigan westward to Chicago might proceed to the mouth of the St. Joseph River on Lake Michigan, then take the Lake Shore Trail direct to Chicago. The natural advantages of territorial exploration and aboriginal travel along this route are quite obvious. It always provided definite geographic orientation. The sand, when compacted, formed an excellent dry, level, and smooth pavement. It avoided obstructions of trees or fallen timber and high prairie grass.

The Lake Shore Trail skirted the extensive marshes and swamps which make most of the Lake Chicago Plain impassable the greater part of the year. The only interrupting water courses to land travel were the Me-eh-way-se-be-weh River (Trail Creek), the Riviere des Bois (at Waverly), and the two mouths of the Grand Kalamick River. There were certain seasonal handicaps, however. In stormy weather the roily surf of the lake would prevent the use of the more compacted sand on the shore. In winter when blizzards blew from the west or north over the lake, there was no such protection as was afforded by forests.

Then, as now, several other alternate routes were available, via the Sauk route previously described. Either the traveller could follow this route all the way westward to the Vincennes Trace and then north along this trail to Chicago, or he could take any one of the several branch trails leading off from the Sauk to points on the old or modern beach trails, as indicated on the fundamant map.

The transect study is limited here to what appears to have been one of the chief routes of traffic in both the Indian and early pioneer period.

In the vicinity of LaPorte four branch trails tributary to the Trail Creek Trail may be used to reach Lake Michigan. All of them follow essentially the same type of terrain, successively traversing several miles of rolling moraine, a mile of lake plain with ancient beach-dune topography, a mile of ground moraine, and about three more miles of lake plain and associated beach-dune deposits.

¹⁹ Knotts, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

²⁰ H. A. Kellar (Editor, Selected Writings), "Solon Robinson, Pioneer and Agriculturist," *Indiana Historical Bureau*, I (1936) : 63.

The cover for the first half of the way is mostly yellow oak, white oak, and red oak barrens. Over the latter half the timber is of the mixed broadleaved and conifer type. The former is essentially the same stocking as previously mentioned; the latter consists chiefly of pine which occurs on both the sandy beach deposits as well as in the swamps near by.

The terminus of the trail, after which the creek itself was named, became the site of Michigan City whose position in relation to Trail Creek and the lake in the early days had about the same strategic significance as that of Chicago to the Chicago River. The site is rich in historic traditions, the kind that well serves local centennial publicity. "The mouth of Trail Creek was visited by Joliet, Marquette, and LaSalle between 1673 and 1679. . . . During the splitting up of the Northwest Territory in the early eighteen hundreds the site of Michigan City was juggled around from Indiana territory to Wayne County, then to Michigan territory."²¹

Calumet Beach-Tolleston Beach Trail Transect

The "inland" route from Michigan City to Chicago follows essentially the Calumet Beach to Baileytown. It continues along the Tolleston Beach westward, crossing the Indiana-Illinois state line in the Hammond-Calumet City vicinity, and thence northward to Chicago. We have named it after the prominent beach ridges with which it is identified. The major part of its course became the first stage coach thoroughfare in the region and later the arterial highways US 12 and US 20 (Fig. 6a).

The sandy beach ridge to Baileytown rises above the marshes and swamps on either side sufficiently to produce a naturally well drained roadbed. The terrain and cover are characterized by the early government surveyor as "sandy barrens" (oak and pine); the adjacent marshes are heavily stocked with cranberry; and the timber in the neighboring swamps consists dominantly of tamarack, aspen, maple, and pine.

The trail route from Baileytown through the Gary region to Hammond, where there also was an Indian village, is ill defined, since the topography here consists of a broad belt of supernumerary sand ridges and miniature marshes. Any one of the ridges might well have served as a pathway. Moreover, evidence of any trail, however well travelled, is not readily preserved on such type of terrain.

The surveyor characterizes the terrain well when he writes that the "Land is flung up into ridges of from 50 links to 5 chains wide, and rows of wet prairie running together with the ridges for miles perfectly straight." The Indian had his choice of trail routes according to the dictates of the weather and his own whims, and so, even the several branches of the trail on the west end must be considered as part of a generalized pattern rather than as definitely definable local pathways.

Throughout most of this sandy tract the land is characterized as "poor sand hills" with a "scrubby growth" of timber. Yellow oak, white oak, and pine are most frequently mentioned in the surveyor's field notes.

²¹ Phil. T. Sprague, "Centennial Celebration, Michigan City, Indiana," *Chamber of Commerce*, (1931) : 1.

On either side of this land route the Pottawatomie also had, of course, the choice of varying his journey by using the Little Kalamick or Grand Calamick rivers. Thus Swartz points out that "The Calumet river was especially attractive . . . , since it furnished so many muskrats and mink for fur, and so many fish and water fowl for food."²²

Leaving the Indian village at Hammond the trail abandons the Tolleston Beach and turns sharply northward along Howard Avenue to an Indian village at Hegewisch. From this place, the trail offers an interesting study in minute local adaptations to a maze of land, water, and vegetation forms much more readily understood from the fundament map than from a description. It is interesting to see how the several branches of the trail follow the oak ridges and avoid the marsh, called Au-be-naw-be.

From the mouth of the Grand Calumet River the trail follows for the most part the immediate beach of Lake Michigan to Fort Dearborn.

The Vincennes (or Hubbard's) Trace Transect

Contrasted with the forest trails on the Indiana side of the Calumet are the prairie trails on the Illinois side. The Vincennes Trace is representative of the latter type. Throughout almost its entire course it extends over prairie country.

Tracing the transect of the terrain and cover over its route, starting on the south, one observes that its course through Crete Township and for two miles into Bloom Township lies over typical rolling terminal moraine topography of well drained prairie. The trail may be regarded as the precursor of Illinois 1, a large part of the route proximating the course of the road.

Just before reaching the village of Bloom it crosses the famous old Sauk Trail. At Bloom it enters on ground moraine which extends slightly into Thornton Township. A small grove of timber is encountered in crossing Thorn Creek. One mile within Thornton Township it crosses sand ridges which on the landform map denote the Glenwood and Calumet beaches, here almost consolidated. Then there is a wet prairie for about two miles, which the surveyor notes is "very level, too wet—not fit for cultivation." This is the Lake Chicago Plain and a certain amount of poorly drained land is to be expected. The trail avoids most of the wet prairies by swinging to the left. Such a deflection is also necessary to avoid crossing the Little Calumet River—not once, but twice, because of its hairpin curve, and the unfordability of the river at this point.

At the south end of Blue Island the trail passes through a large Indian village (later site of the historic Rexford Tavern, 1835). It is the most important trail junction of the Calumet on the Illinois side. No less than seven prominent trail routes converge at or near this point.

From here the Vincennes Trace strikes out northeastward through Calumet Township over "rich level prairie" to the southeast corner of Lake Township. Here

²² K. C. Swartz, "Institutional History of Lake County in the Last Century," *Indiana Magazine of History*, VI (1910) : 160.

at 83rd Street is the site of the historic Kiles Tavern, a pioneer geographic landmark of the stagecoach days.

The Vincennes Trace then leads directly to Fort Dearborn. It follows a strip of white oak and black oak timber which by reference to the landform map is found to coincide exactly with a beach ridge sufficiently elevated to insure a dry path at all seasons.

INDIAN VILLAGES AND THEIR GEOGRAPHIC RELATION TO WHITE MAN'S SETTLEMENT

It is interesting to note an observation that "Indian towns were never located immediately upon a principal trail. It would be too conspicuous to an enemy."²³ The map of Pottawatomie occupancy (Fig. 1) gives just the opposite impression. This discrepancy may be resolved by reference to the fact (also recognized by the source quoted) that the Indian did not establish permanent settlements or occupy them permanently in the same way that white man does. Solon Robinson, a direct observer of Pottawatomie customs, points out that the "same family occupies perhaps a dozen different stops in a year. . . . In winter they generally select some romantically sheltered spot near a lake or stream. . . . In summer they reverse the order, camping on the highest knobs and most airy points on groves; sometimes, though rarely, planting a 'small patch' of corn."²⁴

The fact remains that there were major Indian villages, minor Indian villages, and very temporary camp sites, and that at least the better known settlements were directly on trails or sufficiently close to them to make use of them. There were, of course, villages or encampments off the trails not shown on the map, but it is the prominence of the trail settlements and their connections with the subsequent white man's occupancy that is of primary concern.

Since the map shows the general nature of the habitat of each of the recorded settlements, and since the more prominent settlements along the major trails have already been commented upon in the previous section, it is only necessary to state a few generalizations on the Pottawatomie pattern of settlement.

First of all, it should be pointed out that the mapped data portray only an incomplete picture of settlement, as intimated above. Moreover, since there is not available for the Indiana side the kind of authenticated and detailed field data like those supplied by Scharf for the Cook County area, the areal pattern is not likely to be regionally comparable. Nonetheless, certain valid observations can be made with reference to the occupancy and its relation to the fundament.

1) The major villages are characteristically identified with the major trails, particularly the trail junctions (Merrillville, Blue Island). They also seem to be mostly found on the Illinois side, but since comparable map data for differentiating large and small villages on the Indiana side are not available, the writer classified most such settlements as small on the basis of fragmentary sources investigated.

2) Water sites feature the location of some settlements (Thornton, Hegewisch,

²³ Bowers, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

²⁴ Kellar *op. cit.*, p. 63.

South Chicago). Of these, the one at Thornton was most prominent and actually carried a name—"The Chicago." In fact, Scharf recognized it as the pre-eminent Indian village of the Calumet region, and observed that, together with the other two villages mentioned above, it could control canoe navigation of the Calumet River in its approach to Lake Michigan.²⁵

Just as modern Calumet urban communities have suburban "satellites" rising on their periphery, giving a metropolitan aspect to this area, so the concentration of smaller Indian villages together with the larger ones in the Hyde Park-Thornton area produce a similar suggestion of an agglomerated Indian community.

No less interesting here seems to be the resemblance of the trail web to our present-day highway and railway net and their corresponding influences on the settlement pattern.

3) Wooded sites seem to have had almost a universal appeal, whether along the rim of the moraine next to the prairie country (Fig. 3, e), e.g., Worth, Westville; on beach-dune ridges (Fig. 3, q, v), e.g., Thornton, Hammond; or on prairie bordered inliers of the Lake Chicago or Kankakee plains (Fig. 3, a), e.g., Blue Island, Door Village.

4) It is doubtful whether Calumet Indian villages *per se* were directly instrumental in guiding white man's own selection of sites for urban settlement. But identification of the numerous Indian camp locations by present-day town and city names, as just given above and elsewhere in the paper, and as indicated in Figure 1, reveals an extraordinary coincidence in the two urban settlement patterns. That the presence of friendly Pottawatomies in some cases attracted the white man to their settlement sites is a possible psychological factor; however, it was unquestionably the Indian trail, and particularly the terminus and the junction of arterial trails that constituted the predominant aboriginal influence on the basic pattern of pioneer settlement. It is perhaps equally significant to observe that the same land, vegetation, and water features which attracted the Indian to specific sites, as noted above, operated in much the same way in the settlement planning of the pioneer.²⁶

POTTAWATOMIE AND TRANSITION PIONEER ECONOMY

What was the economic geography like at this stage? As would be expected, life was primitive, but the primary forms of subsistence were well supplied. Ball, one of the most prolific writers of early local history of Lake County, thus observes: "Hundreds and hundreds of bushels (cranberries) were gathered and sent off in wagon load to the nearest markets [sometimes noted on original surveyors' plats (see Westchester Township, Porter County, Fig. 1)]. The Indian children, it is certain, could have had no lack of wild fruit in the summer and fall, from July 1st till frost came. As late as 1837 the two varieties of wild plums, the red and the yel-

²⁵ Albert F. Scharf, *Indian Villages of Chicago and Cook County*. Ms. in the library of the Chicago Historical Society: 1903? Part I.

²⁶ A study of this particular phase of Calumet settlement, virtually completed, has been designed as a sequel to the present paper.

low, were excellent in quality—the red very abundant; and of crabapples, although they were sour, yet large and nice, there was then no lack. There were nuts, too, in great abundance in the time of autumn—hazel nuts, hickory nuts, walnuts, white and black, and beech nuts. In the northeastern part, where the hard or rock maple trees were so large and of so dense a growth, 'thick woods,' the Indians in the spring time could make, which they did make, maple sugar, to sweeten their crab-apples and cranberries."²⁷

A sugar camp, for example, is indicated in northern Jackson Township (Fig. 1). There were also the haw, crabapple, wild grapes, sassafras, and the pawpaw (Section 27, Jackson Township). Hazel is one of the few bush types of vegetation noted recurrently by the surveyors. It is associated with upland timber, most commonly on the Illinois side, as in Frankfort and Bloom townships.

Whereas the cranberry of the marshes was probably the most abundant fruit as noted above, there were many other berries in the marshes and on the variegated topography of the associated sand ridges and elsewhere as noted by early writers—huckleberries (low and bush), blackberries, strawberries, whortleberries, raspberries, roseberries, wintergreen berries, gooseberries, currants, and sand hill cherries.

The wild rice of the marshes most likely furnished an important item in the human diet. It certainly was also the chief attraction for the wild fowl for which the Calumet marshes and its great lakes were famous. In this respect the Calumet was very similar to the neighboring Kankakee marshes and lakes just across the moraine divide to the south.²⁸ Mr. Say of Major Long's Expedition, which passed through these parts in 1823, noted the following aquatic birds: "the mallard (*Anas boschas*), shoveller-duck (*A. clypeata*), blue-winged teal (*A. discors*), common merganser (*Mergus serrator*), common coot (*Fulica americana*), stellate heron or Indian hen (*Ardea minor*), etc. etc."²⁹

The timber tracts and prairies also abounded in food animals, such as squirrels, wild turkeys, partridges, deer, quail, grouse, prairie chickens, and rabbits, and earlier, the buffalo and the elk. Buffalo and elk had apparently ceased to be an important food item shortly after the turn of the 18th century. "The whole of the eastern Illinois and western Indiana as far south as the Vermilion River was once a Pottawatomie domain . . . a great, grassy prairie. Here the buffalo roamed in countless numbers until 1790. In that year, the Indians say, a very deep snow, some four or five feet deep, covered the whole land. Then rain and freeze caused the top of the snow to become a glare of ice. During this time the Buffalo could find nothing to eat. He could not walk through the ice-covered snow and was too heavy to walk on top as did many other animals. In this condition the Buffalo perished from hunger or were killed by the Indians and predatory animals."³⁰

²⁷ Ball, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

²⁸ Alfred H. Meyer, "The Kankakee 'Marsh' of Northern Indiana and Illinois," *Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters*, XXI (1935) : 359-396.

²⁹ Milo Milton Quaife, (Compiler and Editor), *The Development of Chicago, 1674-1914* (Shown in a series of Contemporary Original Narratives). Chicago: 1916. p. 125.

³⁰ Winger, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

The marshes, wet prairies, and dry prairies provided excellent natural pasture and hay for grazing animals. Hay became one of the early settlers' chief commercial products. Indians and the first white settlers are generally supposed to have opened clearings in the forests for the cultivation of corn and other grains. But this apparently was not true for the Calumet region, where prairies, mixed with the forests, were available. The mapped data for Washington Township and neighboring township areas mentioned previously indicate this fact.

Indians as well as whites, however, did raise corn "more than is generally supposed" not only for their own use, but for the growing market for corn in the Lake Michigan area and points farther east. Together with fur it constituted the leading product in trade, detailed discussion of which is reserved for a later paper treatment.

In addition to corn, "The Pottawatomie raised beans, peas, squashes, tobacco, and melons."³¹ Besides these vegetables their white neighbors cultivated "oats, buckwheat, turnips, and potatoes."³²

The forests provided natural shelter and home building materials as well as food. "The timber which filled the native groves and bordered the streams consisted of the various varieties of oak, black walnut, hickory, elm, hard and soft maple, buttonwood, and ironwood . . . most of which in a few years fell before the axe of the settler for the purpose of building log houses, rail fences, fire-wood, etc., and, as soon as saw-mills were built, for lumber."³³

Such softwood timber as occurred in the Calumet was chiefly to be found in a strip along the lake, as indicated on the fundament map. Just how numerous the saw-log conifers were, which grew among the otherwise generally small pines and oaks, is not easy to determine. The present type of scrub cover does not suggest anything like an appreciable stocking of early merchantable timber, and one would hardly get the impression from the relatively few entries of pines in the surveyors' notes that saw-log pine or other conifer trees were very significant for building purposes. However, Major Long, on his expedition for the War Department, reported that in "some places" the pine (apparently white pine) "was very abundant."³⁴ And Solon Robinson, the earliest settler of Lake County and a most astute observer as indicated by his prolific writings which he left for posterity, reports that the land of northwest Lake County was "originally covered with a valuable growth of pine and cedar, which has been nearly all stript off to build up Chicago."³⁵

According to survey notations and present day observation, the more important pine area was and still is the northeast Porter County region, (appropriately named Pine Township), and northern LaPorte County. Packard states that the sand

³¹ W. Vernon Kinietz, *The Indians of the Western Great Lakes, 1615-1760*. University of Michigan Press: 1940. p. 313.

³² Kellar, *op. cit.*, II, p. 59.

³³ George H. Woodruff, et al., *The History of Will County, Ill.* Chicago: 1878. p. 227.

³⁴ Rollo B. Oglesbee and Albert Hale, *History of Michigan City, Indiana*. Edward J. Widdell: 1908. p. 63.

³⁵ Kellar, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

ridges of Michigan Township "were at one time covered with a fine growth of white pine timber, which has entirely disappeared, having been cut off for lumber."³⁶

THE CALUMET FUR TRADE AND THE BAILEY HOMESTEAD HERITAGE

One of the most rewarding exploratory experiences today in the Calumet is the view of a geographic relict of the Pottawatomie days. On the secondary winding road northwest from Porter, linking US 12 and US 20 (former arterial Indian trails), and in a secluded timbered spot on the north bank of the Little Calumet River, one is startled at seeing a cluster of old log cabins which clearly belong to the occupancy of another epoch (Fig. 6b). It is the Bailly homestead, the most geographically significant landmark of the Pottawatomie-French fur trade period. Here in 1822, Joseph Baille (anglicized to Bailly), a French fur trader, with an Indian squaw for his wife, built a home for his family, the first white settlement in the Calumet region.³⁷ Here he also operated the Calumet's leading trading post (sometimes referred to as "Little Fort").³⁸ Indians came as far as fifty miles to exchange their pelts for guns, knives, trinkets, and colored shawls and blankets.³⁹

In terms of commercial geography, Bailly and his trading post may be said to have brought distinction to the Calumet region through the fur trading business in his day much like the Standard Oil refineries at Whiting and the U. S. Steel Corporation plants at Gary have brought distinction to the Calumet in our day.

Bailly's association with another prominent trader by the name of Alexander Robinson⁴⁰ brought him into contact with the largest fur-trading organization of that day—the American Fur Company, whose organizer and chief stockholder was John Jacob Astor, said to have amassed the greatest fortune of his day—\$30,000,-000.⁴¹

Moreover, Bailly's fur-trading territory was one of the best. The far-flung Calumet marshes near the shoreline of Lake Michigan and along the Calumet rivers, and the neighboring Kankakee marshes just a few miles to the south of the moraine excelled in the trapping of beaver and muskrat. The intervening forested morainic

³⁶ Jasper Packard, *History of LaPorte County, Indiana*. S. E. Taylor and Co.: 1876. p. 82.

³⁷ Baileytown, a hamlet about a mile northwest on US 12, is reminiscent of the romantic plans Bailly had in platting his own city and port on Lake Michigan, which dream, however, was never realized.

³⁸ The earliest fur trading in the area dates back, of course, to the expeditions of Joliet and LaSalle through the head of Lake Michigan region. Tradition points to a trading post in LaSalle's day near the Indian trail junction and confluence of the Deep River and the Little Calumet River, a very strategic site. Then in 1785 a William Burnett is reported to have established a post on Trail Creek (site of Michigan City). The Vincennes Trail on the Illinois side of our area has also been called Hubbard's Trace, after one of the most enterprising traders of the region, G. S. Hubbard. In 1822 he established a post at Iroquois, just south of our area, exploiting the fur business of the Iroquois and Kankakee valleys and marketing his pelts at Fort Dearborn, the leading trading post of the Lake Michigan region.

³⁹ Bowers, et al., *op. cit.*, p. 79.

⁴⁰ The last of the principal chiefs of the Pottawatomies, named Chee-Chee-Bing-Way (Blinking Eyes), of mixed Indian, French, and English blood.

⁴¹ Cannon, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

upland abounded in mink, otter, lynx, fox, wolf, and other valuable fur-bearing animals.

The regional position of the post also was advantageous by maintaining extra-regional contacts. Located on one of the chief arterial thoroughfares, "the settlement at Baileytown became widely known; travelers, traders, adventurers, missionaries, and Government officers made it their rendezvous. It was the leading place of assembly for religious exercises; it was an important center of trade; it was a place of safety in time of danger."⁴²

No doubt the river site, aside from its charm, had some transportational utility, especially for local westward travel; however, the writer did not observe any reference to it in the general literature. At any rate, it would appear that the meandering Little Calumet, with its westward course paralleling Lake Michigan, would suggest a poor alternative route to that of shore line traffic on the lake only two miles directly north from the Bailly post. And so it was to this point that Bailly delivered his peltries by pack-horses. There the furs were loaded into thirty-foot boats and rowed by man power to Mackinac Island (Mich-il-i-mac-i-nac)⁴³ (Figs. 4 and 6e). For the Mackinac journey Bailly's "engages" most likely followed the east shore of the lake, a practice apparently conventional at the time. It was also the custom of the period to use sailing vessels or pirogues in the traffic with Mackinac.⁴⁴

Mackinac at this time was the entrepot of the whole Northwest. "All the trade in supplies and goods on the one hand, and in furs and products of the Indian country on the other was in the hands of the parent establishment [Fig. 6f] or its numerous outposts scattered along the lakes Superior and Michigan, the Mississippi, or through still more distant regions."⁴⁵ From Mackinac the pelts were transported to Quebec or Montreal and thence to Europe.

Because of the many irregularities in the private fur-trading business, particularly the demoralizing influence on the Indian resulting from the heavy liquor traffic, Congress attempted to regulate the Indian trade. All traders had to be licensed and Indian agents were appointed who were to establish specific posts for Indian trade.

Fort Dearborn (Chicago), which had figured so prominently in the fur-trading business ever since the French *voyageurs* entered the area, was selected by the government as one of the posts (Fig. 6d). In 1805 it became the government "agency" headquarters and "factory" for the various posts established throughout the Lake Michigan and neighboring areas. "The former had charge of relations with the Pottawatomie, Sauk, Fox, Chippewa, Ottawa, and Miami. . . . The agency distributed presents periodically, held councils with the chiefs, and served as the civil arm of the government in peace-time relations with the local tribes. The factory,

⁴² W. A. Goodspeed and Charles Blanchard, *Counties of Porter and Lake, Indiana; Historical and Biographical*. Chicago: 1882. p. 16.

⁴³ Cannon, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

⁴⁴ Oglesbee, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

⁴⁵ Mrs. John H. Kinzie, "The Early Day of the Northwest." *The Caxton Club* (Chicago, 1901) : 6.

on the other hand, was one of a number of government trading houses established in the West as a means of breaking British control of the Indian trade, weakening English influence among the tribes, and cultivating friendly relations with the Indians by supplying their wants with superior goods at reasonable prices."⁴⁶

The government plan designed to destroy the influence of the private trader, however, does not seem to have been very effective. Thus Buck reports that persons familiar with the situation regarded the factories too few in number and too scattered—only four in the Northwest (at Chicago, Green Bay, Prairie du Chien and Fort Edwards). On the other hand, the private trader, as will be noted from this account, contacted the Indian directly in their own hunting grounds.⁴⁷

SIGNIFICANT RELICT FORMS OF CALUMET POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

Another present day heritage of Pottawatomie occupancy is the Indian Boundary Line entering the area in Green Garden Township and extending diagonally northeast to the mouth of the Grand Calumet River (Figs. 1 and 2). A similar diagonal line runs parallel to this on the northwest side of the Des Plaines River. Title to the twenty-mile strip between the lines was secured by the government from the Indians in 1816 for the purpose of building a ship canal from Lake Michigan to the Illinois River. The first suggestion for such a water link (the antecedent of the modern Illinois and Michigan Canal) was made during our second war with Great Britain (1812-14), from which experience it was realized how valuable such a canal might be.⁴⁸

The geographic import of this strategic proposal has long been commonly recognized, but what is less generally known is the discordant land survey relationships that exist on either side of the Indian Boundary Line, and which have disconcerted surveyors ever since. On Figures 1 and 2, it can be observed that the township lines on either side of the Indian diagonal line do not coincide. The land surveys were made independently from the east and the west (in the 1830's), subsequent to the canal land survey (1821-22). This has resulted in discrepant section lines, confusing property boundaries, and irregular road "jogs."⁴⁹

Original land surveys in preparing a country for white man's occupancy seem to have had their own peculiar way of affecting such settlement. When Bailly settled in what is now Porter County he thought he was actually locating in Michigan territory.⁵⁰ And though Indiana was admitted into the Union in 1816, there was confusion and conflict over its northern boundary as late as 1837. When Michigan was admitted to the Union, it "surrendered" its claims to the controverted territory in exchange for the Northern Peninsula which the government offered as

⁴⁶ Bessie Louise Pierce, *A History of Chicago, 1848-1871*, II. p. 17.

⁴⁷ Solon Justus Buck, *Illinois in 1818*. Springfield: 1917. p. 19.

⁴⁸ Woodruff, et. al., *op. cit.*, pp. 298-299.

⁴⁹ See, for example, the northwest corner of Section 33, Frankfort Township, Chicago Areal Geology Map-Frankfort, U. S. Geologic Survey, Washington, D. C., 1930-32.

⁵⁰ John O. Bowers, "The Old Bailly Homestead," paper in Gary City Library, probably read before the Gary Historical Society, (1922) : 4.

a "consolation" award. One writer observes it would require volumes to tell the boundary story, involving as it does the political organization of the Northwest Territory, and of the states of Ohio ("Toledo War"), Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin.^{51, 52, 53, 54, 55} Suffice it here to point to the problem and its salient geographic concern to northern Indiana, including our area.

The line on the fundament map (Fig. 1) extending through the southernmost point of Lake Michigan is the east-west state dividing line provided for by the Ordnance of 1787 for the division of the Northwest Territory. For the interstate relations of this line see Figure 4. This line was later claimed by Michigan as her southern boundary. But the Enabling Act for the admission of Indiana as a state provided for a line 10 miles north of the old one.⁵⁶

This latter line was defended by the then governor of Indiana, Noah Noble, on the grounds that Indiana would otherwise lose not only a ten-mile strip of one of "the fairest and most desirable portions of her territory," but would also be "entirely excluded from any access to the lake, except through a foreign jurisdiction."⁵⁷

Into this Calumet section and the neighboring area to the south migrated the first group of white settlers (1829) and established the first county government at LaPorte (1830). This fact together with the charting of the first mail route through the Calumet from Chicago to Detroit in 1831, the formal relinquishment of the Indian lands by the Pottawatomie in 1832, and the founding of the first lake port the same year at Michigan City mark the transition of the Pottawatomie to the Pioneer period.

SUMMARY

This investigation of the historical geography of one of the present-day most outstanding industrial regions of the world is based on two primary objectives: first, to reconstruct, within the limits of the research data and personal resources, the fundament of the natural heritage of the Calumet and recapture some of the forms of Indian-French occupancy significant in a geographic interpretation of the history of the period; second, to organize and present the data of this period in such a way as to show how the present occupancy forms are related to the past.

The chief problem in a study of this type is to translate the data or literary works

⁵¹ Bowers, *op. cit.*

⁵² R. D. Hammons, Original Government Surveys of Gary (a typewritten letter in Gary Library, May 31, 1934).

⁵³ Willard V. Way, "The Facts and Historical Events of the Toledo War of 1835," *The Magazine of History*, XL (1930) : 8-11.

⁵⁴ For one of the most comprehensive accounts of this singular episode in the political geography of our area see Mrs. Frank J. Seehan, "The Northern Boundary of Indiana," *Indiana Historical Society*, VIII, No. 6.

⁵⁵ Also Harold Lindley (Chairman, Committee), *History of the Ordinance of 1787 and the Old Northwest Territory*. Marietta, Ohio: 1937.

⁵⁶ Incidentally, this contested strip was originally purchased (1828) by the Federal government from the Pottawatomie.

⁵⁷ The Historical Records Survey, Works Progress Administration, No. 46, *Inventory of the County Archives of Indiana (LaPorte)*, Indianapolis: 1939.

of non-geographers into the concepts and the vernacular of the geographer. The attempt to do this in cartographic form has proved particularly trying at times—to fill a gap here and an indecisive detail there to make for contiguous expression. Fortunately, the original landscape data of the early government surveyor, though still in sketchy and fragmentary form, could be pieced together to give a basic pattern into which to fit or adapt regional or local commentary material from contemporary or near contemporary sources, as indicated in various footnote references.

The "synthetic" silhouette sketch accompanying this paper may be said geographically to summarize the results of these efforts. From it one can observe both the vertical and horizontal geographic relationships of the basic natural and occupancy forms. This generalized panorama, moreover, suggests how the varied landscapes either handicapped or favored subsequent white man's settlement. The thick timber on the major part of the moraine, the extensive marshes and wet prairies on the lake plain, and the sandy "barrens" of the far-flung ancient beach deposits and modern dunes help to explain the singularly belated pioneer settlement of this otherwise strategically located region.

How the incoming frontiersman reacted to this environment and impressed his own cultural pattern upon it is the theme of a subsequent paper.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Pursuit of a study of this type calls for contact with many sources in addition to cultivating an intimate familiarity with the area. Accordingly, visits have been made to various libraries for obtaining as much original and secondary material as was available to compose a unified stage and story treatment of the aboriginal landscape of our region.

References have been consulted in the library of the Chicago Historical Society, the library of the University of Chicago, the Newberry Library, the Chicago Public Library, the Gary City Library, the Indiana State Library, and the Library of Congress at Washington.

Plat data were transcribed in the Capitol buildings at Indianapolis, Indiana, and at Springfield, Illinois, where duplicate sets of the original government land survey plats for the respective states are on file.

For the courtesies, privileges, and assistance extended by the personnel of these various agencies, the writer feels deeply indebted. He further wishes to acknowledge the secretarial assistance of Mrs. A. H. Meyer while working in the statehouses mentioned and in the Library of Congress.

And finally, the writer wishes to express his appreciation to the Indiana Academy of Science and the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters for their research grants in partial support of this project.

Accepted November 1953.

